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For me or not for me? : fragility and risk in mature students' decision-making / Pat Davies and Jenny Williams

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**Abstract**

Drawing on a research project which investigated the recent decline in mature student recruitment to higher education in the UK, this article explores the decision-making process among samples of potential and new mature entrants to nine case study higher education institutions. It compares the emphasis in public policy on higher education as a private investment with the understandings and interpretations of individuals in the act of applying for entry. It concludes that while at a generalised level mature learners believe that the private return on investment will be high, at a personal level the concepts of fragility and risk are more pertinent to understanding the complexity of their decision-making process, particularly for those over 25 years of age. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)